

There are two other broad general modes of dealing with the anxiety connected with real aggressive impulses, which are of universal significance in the normal development of children, namely, (a) the "flight to phantasy", and (b) the "flight to reality".

In the first of these, the child attempts to withdraw from contact with real people and real situations, these having for one reason or another become too difficult and dangerous.

He takes refuge in a more or less complete and more or less temporary flight into the realm of imagination, usually some type of wish-fulfilment. Such a flight occurs to some extent in every neurosis, as well as in ordinary day-dreaming. It is found in a more general, more massive and more cumulative form in certain psychoses, notably schizophrenia.

In the "flight to reality", the child actively seeks real experience with people and events outside himself, as a reassurance against his inner phantastic dreads, reality having been found (as it normally is) to be safer and better than his worst imaginings. He limits his thinking as far as possible to the terms of real experience, and tries to exclude imagination and imaginative pursuits.

All children show these two mechanisms on various occasions and in various directions. Which of the two is characteristic-ally and more permanently adopted will depend to a very large extent upon the course of actual experience in the early days of infancy and childhood.¹

Both mechanisms, and the effect of an actual experience upon the child's choice between them, happen to be illustrated in a special degree by the behaviour of one little girl described to me by her mother. The mother wrote to me because she was troubled by the abnormal extent to which her little girl withdrew not only into phantasy in

general, but into
one fixed phantasy in particular. She wrote as
follows :

" About six months ago she (aged 3:0)
commenced pre-
tending to be someone else, as I believe is
common to most
children, and I always joined in the game. To
begin with, the
pretences lasted only a few minutes at a time
—she would
be 'Teddy's little mother', then a 'Dadda', then
the 'post-
man *', and so on. Finally she was ' Dinkie', who
in real life
is a neighbour's black cat and who often visits
us. She has

¹ See M. N. Searl, " The Flight to Reality," *International
Journal
of Psycho-Analysis*, Vol. X, 1929,